



## Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://www.feedthefuture.gov/article/mobile-phones-give-agro-dealers-boost-rwanda>

## Mobile Phones Give Agro-Dealers a Boost in Rwanda

Claudine Mukeshimana, 31, is a mother of two and a businesswoman in Rwanda's eastern province. In 2003, she opened a small general store selling milk, sugar and rice. A few years later, hoping to make better use of her agronomy training, she changed the focus of her business and began selling agricultural supplies such as seeds, pesticides, fungicides, tools and fertilizers.

Since then, she hasn't looked back.

Today, Mukeshimana's customers come from throughout the district to purchase inputs from her store. Her fertilizer sales alone are one ton per month, worth about \$5,200. Though she was thrilled with her success, she found it difficult to manage the demand and plan her business without the proper tools.

"I had many problems in managing my business," Mukeshimana explains. "I was selling fertilizers without knowing how much profit I was making. I could not manage my stocks; I would order too much or too little."

Mukeshimana joined a U.S. Agency for International Development training program – supported by Feed the Future – that aims to assist the Government of Rwanda in transitioning from a subsidized public fertilizer distribution system to one managed by the private sector. The program does this by providing training and tools to agro-dealers like Mukeshimana, promoting policies friendly to the private sector and supporting the sustainable development of the fertilizer value chain.

In training, Mukeshimana was introduced to mFarms technology, a smartphone- and web-based program designed to help small-scale entrepreneurs track stocks, sales, and profits, and share market and price information. Mukeshimana and her fellow agro-dealers received phones and learned how to use mFarms to manage their businesses in a way that meets their needs and the needs of their customers.

"Now I do everything on my smartphone," Mukeshimana says. "I record the quantities I buy and keep track of whatever I sell, day by day. I check my inventory once a week and enter the stock quantities into my phone. That way, I am sure of ordering the right quantities at the right time. Every day, after the last customer, I check the quantities sold and make sure that the money collected actually corresponds to what I should have in the store."

To purchase stock in preparation for the early 2014 growing season, Mukeshimana took a \$1,400 bank loan and repaid it in less than two months.

"Earlier, I was afraid to take a loan to expand my shop," she says. "Now I have no more fear because of what I have learned. Using mFarms, I can manage my business like a professional."